

Massachusetts Department of Correction

Prison Re-entry Bulletin



RESTRAINING ORDERS on Released Inmates

This series of Prison Re-entry Bulletins published by the Massachusetts DOC is dedicated to further inform re-entry initiatives and public safety policy. For more information about Massachusetts DOC publications please see our webpage at www.state.ma.us/doc or contact us at Research@doc.state.ma.us. --Rhiana Kohl, Ph.D., Director of the Research & Planning Division at the Massachusetts DOC

During the last 6 months of 2002 (July-December), approximately 1,187 inmates were released to the street from the DOC, either on Good Conduct Discharge/Expiration of Sentence or Parole. The breakdown by gender of these inmates was 30% females (n=361) and 70% males (n=826). Female offenders represent a higher proportion of the released inmate population than they do the daily inmate population due to the fact they serve, on average, much shorter sentences. Information about whether or not they had a history of, and/or any open restraining orders*, upon release, was collected from the Massachusetts Court Activity Record Information (CARI) database by DOC Research Staff.

Females: Of the 361 female inmates released to the street, July-Dec 2002:

- 129 (35%) of the females had had a restraining order previously taken out on them. Those 129 females *averaged* 2.2 restraining orders per female inmate.
- **19 (5%) of the female inmates being released had at least one open restraining order at time of release.**

Males: Of the 826 male inmates released to the street, July-Dec 2002:

- 314 (38%) of males had had a restraining order previously taken out on them. Those 314 males *averaged* 2 restraining orders per male inmate.
- **34 (4%) of male inmates being released had at least one open restraining order at time of release.**

Totals: Of the 1,187 inmates released to the street, July-Dec 2002:

- 443 (37%) had a history of having at least one restraining order on them.
- **53 (4%) had at least one open restraining order on them at time of release.**

The implications of these findings are important, particularly in regard to an offender's transition from prison to his or her respective community. More research as to when the restraining orders were taken out and why, would be useful. Another issue is whether or not inmates with a history of, or more urgently, open restraining orders at time of release, were released to any criminal justice (probation or parole) supervision. Our findings indicated 40% of the inmates in this sample with open restraining orders were NOT under any post-release (probation or parole) supervision. This is a notable result of our research, but caution to over generalize based on relatively small numbers is warranted (n=53 of offenders with open restraining orders at release).

*Restraining orders were defined by Massachusetts General Law (MGL) Chapter 209A. Accordingly, if an offender had had a restraining order from another state, we would not have included that information in our count.